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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the literature relative to the theory and practice of literature-based reading instruction, and seeks to bring clarity concerning the concept of literature-based reading instruction. The paper points out that from a theoretical point of view advocates of literature-based reading instruction draw upon the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. It notes that proponents of literature-based reading instruction propose that reading should develop naturally and functionally. The paper concludes that instruction should be guided by the needs and interests of learners, beginning with real literature and meaningful print rather than with fragmented language or language constructed for instructional purposes. Although varied studies are reported that support a holistic literature-based approach to reading instruction, the paper suggests that more studies are needed relative to the implementation of literature-based reading programs. (Eighty-eight references are attached.) (PRA)

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Literature-Based Reading Instruction: An Analysis

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Running head: LITERATURE-BASED READING INSTRUCTION

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Literature Based Reading Instruction
An Analysis

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Running head: LITERATURE BASED READING INSTRUCTION

Abstract

This paper reviews the literature relative to the theory and practice of literature-based reading instruction. The study seeks to bring greater clarity concerning the concept of literature-based reading instruction. It is pointed out that from a theoretical point of view advocates of literature-based reading instruction draw upon the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. Proponents of literature-based reading instruction propose that reading should develop naturally and functionally. Instruction should be guided by the needs and interests of learners; it should begin with real literature and meaningful print rather than with fragmented language or language constructed for instructional purposes. Varied studies are reported that support a holistic literature-based approach to reading instruction. This review suggests, however, that more studies are needed relative to the implementation of literature-based reading programs.

Literature-Based Reading Instruction

An Analysis

Literature-based reading instruction is a topic of considerable discussion among educators today. What is literature-based reading instruction? What is its value in education? The purpose of this paper is to review the literature for its contribution to the theory and practice of literature-based reading instruction and to synthesize this information for the purpose of bringing greater clarity and understanding concerning the literature-based reading instruction movement.

A number of writers have defined literature-based reading instruction on the bases of their observations and research. Hiebert and Colt (1989) concluded that literature-based reading instruction involves a total reading program with various combinations of teacher and student interaction and with selection of literature so that children develop as thoughtful, proficient readers. Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) speak of literature-based reading instruction as a process which primarily used "real" books to teach and foster literacy. Zarrillo (1989) defines literature-based reading instruction as practices and student activities

using novels, informational books, short stories, poems and plays. He insists that the literature not be rewritten for instructional purposes and that it supplant rather than supplement the basal reading textbook. In Literature-Based Reading Programs At Work, Hancock and Hill (1987, p. 1) state that literature-based reading instruction refers to "teachers planning, carrying out, and evaluating reading programs that are based on using real books rather than basal reading schemes."

Clearly, literature-based reading instruction encompasses a wide range of materials and practices. It is a term used when a variety of literature is utilized in the teaching of reading.
Advocates of literature-based reading instruction suggest that literature be the primary, if not the total reading material used in reading programs. It is implied further that methods of instruction be appropriate for the study of literature.

The Theoretical Base

The movement toward literature-based reading instruction has been promoted by educators with a whole language perspective toward literacy development (Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores, 1987; Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985; Smith, 1971). The whole language philosophy is based on the assumption that instruction should keep language whole and involve children in using it purposefully and functionally. With respect to reading, Goodman (1986), a leading advocate of the whole language philosophy, states that teachers should put aside the carefully sequenced basal readers and encourage students to read literature for information, for enjoyment, and to cope with the world around them.

Research and literature with a holistic perspective of the reading process began to emerge during the 1960's and 1970's. Prior to that time, as research by Guthrie (1980) shows, reading was conceptualized primarily as an accumulation of discrete skills and was thought to begin with knowledge of individual words. Most research in reading was directed toward word recognition.

Within the context of the whole language perspective toward reading and literacy, there is

considerable interest in the psycholinguistic experiences of learners. Reading is seen as a natural part of the process of language development as a whole. Reading is viewed as beginning with the reader's experience and predictions about meaning. Instead of focusing on skill development and the understanding of exact textual meaning, comprehending passages and relating textual information to personal experience and prior knowledge is the primary objective.

Goodman (1973, p. 31) describes reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game in which readers "select the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time." He emphasizes that readers bring to the reading act their accumulated experiences, language development, and thought in order to anticipate meanings in printed material. Other researchers support Goodman's analysis of reading (Cooper and Petrosky, 1976; Levin and Kaplan, 1970; Smith 1971).

Along with psycholinguistic understandings, models of reading with a holistic perspective have strong foundations in cognitive psychology. From a cognitive psychology view, Piagetian theory asserts that intelligence develops gradually as children move

through developmental stages. Children progress best, however, through active manipulation of objects and ideas. Through activity, children acquire knowledge by incorporating new information and insights into prior meaning and understanding (Furth, 1970). Piagetian theory argues that children in kindergarten and first grade are not ready for code-emphasis, rule-oriented phonics instruction.

Piaget's work points to the importance of curricula in which children are active learners, and learning situations which are social and functional. Models for learning are also important for children. Most importantly, Piagetian theory suggests the need for teachers to adapt instruction to the developmental needs of learners.

Vygotsky (1962, 1978) theorizes that a child's intellectual growth is contingent on the mastery of language. He also maintains that there are developmental stages of thought and language, and emphasizes the social and functional aspect of learning and language development. Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) states that learning occurs "only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers."

The work of cognitive psychologists such a Piaget and Vygotsky stresses the social nature of learning. It suggests that teachers should not try to simply pass learning on to children, but should provide experiences and activities which allow children to develop their cognitive structures. Generally, advocates of cognitive theory believe that language development is dependent on cognition. They propose that children develop knowledge of the world generally and then map this knowledge onto language systems.

According to cognitive psychology, thinking is a necessary prerequisite to and concomitant for reading at any level and for any purpose. Any teaching aimed at intellectual development will simultaneously promote language development. Thus, the early language of children as well as their development overall is related to actions, objects, and events they have experiences in their environments (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969).

Researchers who have studied the cognitive processes of readers state that in the act of reading, readers are able to understand story structure, draw inferences from passages, and utilize their own background knowledge with text material in searching

for meaning. They propose that true reading begins with the reader's search for knowledge and meaning. Individual words on a page are recognized only to facilitate understanding (Raven and Salver, 1970; Ryan and Semmuel, 1979; Stauffer, 1971).

Smith (1988) sheds further light on this position when he explains that children learn to read as they learn to speak, by generating and testing hypotheses about reading materials and getting appropriate feedback. In addition, he points our that although reading cannot be taught, children can be given opportunities to learn to read. First they need to have people read to them, and then they need the chance to read for themselves with assistance as needed. Teaching a sequential set of subskills to be integrated into the reading process is quite different from merely establishing conditions that will allow students to learn to read.

Ideas from cognitive psychology and linguistics lay the underpinnings for the whole language view of reading. The literature suggests that reading and reading instruction should be informal, natural and, to a large extent, controlled by the desires, needs, and motives of the learner. Instead of beginning with

fragments of language, such as letters and sounds, complete forms of written language such as stories, poems, and signs should be used in the development of literacy. Children should be invited to experiment and to do the best they can in reading. They should be encouraged to determine for themselves whether or not what they read makes sense.

Studies of Good Readers

Advocates of literature-based reading instruction believe that the methods of reading instruction used in the classroom should be those which help children to adopt the reading behaviors of good readers (Lamme, 1989). Studies and observations have identified some of the characteristics of good readers. These studies seem to support a literature-based approach to reading.

Hickman (1977) studied the reading behavior of two "extraordinarily literate people in attempting to answer the question "What do fluent readers do?" Her answer was that fluent readers read books and passages of their own choosing for their own purposes with a critical eye. Fluent readers, she concluded, do not read simply to be reading, but for a reason. Rasiniki's (1988) observations support Hickman's findings. Interest, purpose and choice are important

in the behavior of good readers. "By observing children doing things that emanate from their own interests," Rasiniki states "we can get a glimpse of the power and potential that is hidden within each child" (p. 397).

An ethnographic study revealed that first graders in high and low reading groups have different concepts about reading (Bondy, 1985). According to the study, children in high reading groups think reading is a way of learning, a private pleasure, and social activity. In contrast, children in the low reading groups think reading is saying words correctly, doing school work, and a source of status.

Reading instruction with a holistic perspective also draws on research related to readers who learned to read at home without school instruction. Durkin's 1961 study is perhaps the most authoritative study of this type. It concluded that children are able to learn to read without deliberate assistance from adults. Durkin studied 49 natural readers and reported that these children acquired reading abilities through experiences with whole texts provided by strong reading models. Clark (1976) and Thorndike (1973) give strong support to Durkin's conclusions.

Hoskisson (1979) suggests that natural readers solve the problem of learning to read as they construct their knowledge of written language. Hearing written language is essential to testing personal hypotheses about written language. Parents and other caregivers set the stage for natural reading development when they read to young children and when they provide children with a rich literary environment.

Overall, the literature indicates that children who have learned to read before going to school or those who rapidly learn to read once they begin school, have been read to from earliest childhood. These children have knowledge of how extended written language functions. They have developed a sense of story structure and can follow plots and character development. They know that they can obtain information and enjoyment from reading (Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985). In terms of technique, good readers read for meaning and self-correct when they make a mistake that does not make sense. Also, they reread favorite books and thereby develop fluency (Lamme, 1987).

Advocates of literature-based reading instruction believe that the strategies teachers use in teaching

reading should be similar to those used in literate homes. The school should provide a series of daily activities involving books and expose children to a variety of literature and other reading materials. Teachers should read to children every day so that children will develop a love for books as well as important concepts about reading. Learning to read naturally begins when parents read to young children and let them handle books, and that process should be continued or initiated with teachers reading aloud and including books naturally in the classroom.

From the perspective of literature-based instruction proponents, all children in school should be involved in reading and literature. Children should be read stories and encouraged to select their favorite ones for rereading. Their participation in reading activities should be encouraged and nurtured. The focus of a reading program should be to help children figure out for themselves how written language works (Newman, 1985). Hoskisson (1979) suggests that no formal hierarchy of reading skills should be imposed on children since only a child can determine what can be assimilated and accommodated within his or her own personal cognitive structure. Smith (p. 179) maintains

further that reading can never be separated from the purposes, prior knowledge and feelings of the person engaged in the activity or from the nature of the text being read. Children learn continuously through engagements in reading that make sense to them.

Criticism of Basal Readers

Proponents of literature-based reading instruction argue out that real books and literature should be used in reading instruction. The use of literature is consistent with holistic understandings which maintain that instruction should not begin with fragmented language or language constructed for instructional purposes, but should employ complete forms of language such as stories, poems, and informational material. Though basal readers are the most widely used resource material in the United States for teaching reading, their use is not considered consistent with the whole language perspective toward reading development.

One major problem cited is that the basal reading guides, which most teachers use, often have lessons that emphasize isolated aspects of language and lead learners to put value on fragments of language such as letter-sound correspondence. Further, guides tend to discourage students from taking risks by introducing

arbitrary sequences of skills (Goodman, 1986). Advocates of literature-based reading instruction point out that basal readers often create artificial language passages and mar the use of literature by gearing it to skill development.

Newman (1985) has pointed to assumptions which she maintains underlie basal reading programs, assumptions which conflict with a psycholinguistic view of how language develops. One assumption is that the vocabulary and syntax of beginning reading material must be rigorously controlled and simplified. This practice, she argues is questionable because while what children say may seem simple, their language environment is complex. Children hear a full range of words and syntactic structures and from this language environment select and reconstruct those elements which they need to communicate meaning. Therefore, to be substantive, the language available to children should be whole both in meaning and in structure.

A second assumption is that accuracy in identifying words is important. Attention given to vocabulary words and word identification skills implies that unless students identify all the words in reading passage correctly, they will not be able to understand

the material. This emphasis can lead many teachers to insist upon accurate word identification without helping children to focus sufficiently on meaning. Moreover, close attention to the surface features of words and word parts, according to Newman, is at odds with what is understood holistically about children's intuitions concerning how language functions.

Research lends some support to the criticism of basals. There are studies which indicate that children who are exposed only to basal reading programs tend to have negative ideas of what reading is all about. Johns and Ellis (1976) found that only a few children in their study felt reading is concerned with a search for meaning. Sixty-four percent of the answers in response to the questions "What is reading?" were concerned with classroom procedures or educational value; twenty-five percent reflected a word recognition, decoding emphasis; eleven percent indicated a meaning emphasis.

Cairney (1988) reported that children's perceptions of the purpose of basal reading activities indicate a focus on materials and procedures rather than on meaning. Many of the perceptions of children studied seem based upon dysfunctional notions about

literacy. They did not see meaning as important when reading basal readers nor did they find basal reading material intrinsically interesting. It was found also that the children placed great emphasis upon decoding, vocabulary, and accuracy.

Eckhoff (1983) found that children who read only the abbreviated language of basal readers tended to write short choppy sentences. Children who saw more natural, syntactically mature language in their reading materials wrote more sophisticated sentences. This study is significant since reading and writing are mutually reinforcing processes in language learning.

The authors of Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985) directed their criticisms of basal teaching toward two frequently accompanying practices: ability grouping and the lack of independent reading time. In his review of the research on ability grouping in basal reading settings, Unsworth (1984) concluded that homogeneous grouping is not effective for improving reading achievement levels. The disparity between good and poor readers increases as students spend time in reading groups that remain inflexible from year to year. Hiebert's (1983) review of studies showed differences in the teaching of high and low reading

groups. Low ability groups spend more time on decoding tasks and oral reading than do high reading groups. Teachers spend more time dealing with behavior management with low achieving reading. Teachers also communicate to these students the negative status of the reading group. Becoming a Nation of Readers encouraged educators to find alternatives to ability grouping.

The absence of independent reading is another concern often associated with basal reading programs. After the basal reading activities, often there is often little time remaining for independent and individualized reading. The 1984 National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that only 10 percent of fourth grade students had read a novel for school (Lapointe, 1986). Goodlad (1984) found that reliance on basal and other commercial materials led to a predominance of skill-related lessons. He concluded that the state of reading instruction in the classes observed was dismal. Apart from the practice of oral round-robin reading "reading occupied about 6 percent of class time at the elementary level." (p. 106). It appears that in many basal reading programs, reading books from the library seems often to be viewed as an

activity to be done only after all other assignments are completed or during special periods such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).

Despite the criticisms made concerning basal reading programs, some educators see value in the use of basal readers. McCallum (1988) contends that basal series partially fill the gap between research and practice by translating research findings into instructional practices which meet the constraints under which teachers operate. McCallum points our further that most reading teachers do not have the time, energy, or expertise to develop the types of materials and activities suggested by researchers, school systems, legislators, and parents.

Chall's research (1967, 1983) concluded that a code emphasis with systematic phonics instruction for beginning readers tends to result both in better word recognition and comprehension achievement. However, Chall does not ignore reading-for-meaning practice. She advocates that changes be made in basal readers to improve their content, including more literature. She also recommends that library books rather than workbooks be used by children who are working with the

teacher and that writing be incorporated into the teaching of reading.

Adams (1990) supports Chall's research on beginning reading instruction with a code-emphasis. Yet, she states that there should not be so much diviseness over code-emphasis and meaning-emphasis in reading instruction. Written text, she maintains, has both form and function. To read, children must learn to deal with both, and teachers must help children with task.

Studies indicate that basal reading programs are often conducted in a manner that does not promote optimum reading development. Such programs, it is suggested, place too much emphasis on word recognition and not enough emphasis on comprehension. Moreover, the diluted literary quality of much of the content in basal readers is a point for significant criticism. There is some support, however, for the use of basals in conjunction with literature for elementary school reading programs.

Support for Literature in Reading Instruction

Generally, children's books have greater richness of vocabulary, sentence structure, and literary form than basal readers. They also have more plot

complications, more character development, and conflict. Holistic literature-based classrooms propose to be rich in a variety of books and print. These classrooms make little use of materials written specifically to teach reading (Altwerger, Edelsky, and Flores, 1987; Koeller, 1981). Fielding, Wilson, and Anderson (1984) note that natural texts support reading as a meaning related activity.

Basals authors have relied on readability formulas to edit or choose the content of reading texts. Studies by Eldredge and Butterfield (1984, 1986) suggest that it is unnecessary to rely on such formulas. According to their research, in which second grade children chose reading material from a classroom library, sixty-two percent of the books chosen had average readability scores above the fourth grade level. Yet, the children read, enjoyed, and comprehended the books without apparent difficulty.

Consistent with Eldredge and Butterfield's work, Newman (1985) asserts that readers must rely on prior knowledge in order to make sense of print. All children have a wealth of knowledge gleaned from experiences. This knowledge is an essential resource for reading and learning to read. The materials chosen

for reading should be written in the kind of language children have come to expect of books. With these materials children are able to use what they know about language, story structure, and content to understand print and construct meaning.

Proponents of literature-based reading instruction point to the meaningful and challenging activities provided for children in their programs. They claim that in such programs children spend a great deal of time reading. Moreover, rather than struggling with the skills tasks of the basal programs, children write stories, act in plays, discuss books, and use artistic media to respond to literature (Durkin 1978-79; Glazer, 1981; Goodman, 1986; Huck, Helpler and Hickman, 1987). The reading of literature by children seems to correlate with reading achievement. Related studies support the more toward literature-based reading instruction. Greaney (1980) studied the association between out-of-school reading and reading achievement. He reported a positive correlation between book reading time and reading proficiency. The findings of Greaney's investigation are similar to those of Long and Henderson (1973).

Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) investigated the relation between out-of-school activities and reading achievement in fifth grade students. Reading books was found to be the best predictor of several measures of reading achievement, including gains in reading achievement between second and fifth grade. The researchers indicated that the book-related activities teachers provide in class have an important influence on the amount of time children spend reading books after school hours.

Stahn and Miller (1989) reported that whole language and basal reader approaches are approximately equal in their effects on reading achievement. They suggested that holistic approaches might be most effective for teaching functional aspects of reading whereas more direct approaches might be better at helping students master the word recognition skills prerequisite to effective comprehension.

However, researchers such as Schickedanz (1990) and McGee and Lomax (1990) assert that the Stahl and Miller study misrepresents concepts related to emergent literacy and current approaches to reading based on the whole language philosophy. McGee and Lomax further point out that several studies show greater reading

gains for literature-based reading instruction in conjunction with basal reader programs than basal instruction alone (Chandler & Baghan, 1986; Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1986; Pfau, 1967; Phillips, 1986).

Available studies and reports indicate that literature-based reading instruction can b e of great benefit in developing reading proficiency in students. Continued support from research can strengthen the position of literature-based reading instruction advocates who have a holistic perspective. More evidence of the value of literature-based reading programs along with reports of assessment methods and measures of effectiveness would benefit the current thrust toward using literature in the reading program.

Strategies For Literature-Based Reading Instruction

It is important that teachers be knowledgeable of strategies for teaching reading with literature. A number of patterns or strategies have been reported (Hiebert and Colt, 1989; Zarrillo, 1988, 1989). Not all approaches with literature of necessity imply a holistic approach to reading instruction. Teachers who wish to implement a literature-based reading program in a whole language, psycholinguistic mode will need to select strategies and activities which allow children

opportunities to develop as readers who are concerned with constructing meaning from written texts and who can accommodate and relate written information to their own prior knowledge.

Zarrillo (1989) reported three main approaches for implementing a literature-based reading program. These include (1) individualized reading with self-selection and self-pacing, (2) literature units, and (3) core books. His findings are based on an analysis of classroom practices by teachers who identified their reading programs as literature-based. Each of these organizing approaches has been described in the literature.

The essential characteristics of the individualized reading approach include: (1) self-selection of materials by students for their own instruction, (2) self-pacing by students as they read materials, (3) individual conferences between the student and the teachers, and (4) groups assigned for reasons other than ability or proficiency in reading. It is to be noted, however, that there are many variations of the individualized reading approach, all of which are not literature-based. A complete

discussion of the individualized reading approach is given by Veatch (1959, 1978).

Coody and Nelson (1982), Glazer (1981), Glazer and Williams (1979), Huck and Hickman (1976), and Moss (1984) have defined the literature unit orientation. A literature unit is considered to be a small set of books related by some literary element such as style, a theme, or setting. The entire class or special group reads or listens to the literature in a literature unit. Students participate in a variety of response activities related to the readings. These may include discussion, writing, drama, and artistic expression. Self-selection can be a feature of this approach if students choose materials included in the unit.

Core literature refers to selections which have been identified as important for close reading and intensive consideration in the classroom. The literature should be viewed not only as significant in content, but also as a stimulus for writing and discussion (Alexander, 1987). Teachers may use a variety of sources for teaching ideas for core books. However, as Zarrillo (1989) points out, teachers who are most effective use core books as springboards for

independent reading and writing; others may simply substitute core books for textbooks.

The three orientations to literature-based reading instruction discussed above should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Teachers have developed programs that have features of each orientation. Strickland and Cullinam (1986), Hill (1983), and Hancock and Hill (1987) have described classrooms which employ combinations of individualized reading, literature units, and core literature.

Hiebert and Colt (1989) describe the following three distinct patterns of literature-based reading instruction: (1) teacher-led instruction with teacher selected literature (2) teacher and student-led interaction with teacher and student selection of literature, (3) independent application and student selected literature. These researchers assert that when teachers focus only on independent reading of student selected material, they fail to consider the guidance that students require for becoming expert readers. On the other hand, a focus on teacher-led instruction fails to develop the independent reading strategies needed for lifelong learning. Thus, a total reading program should consist of various combinations

of teacher and student interaction and selection of literature so that children develop as thoughtful proficient readers.

Conclusions

Literature-based reading instruction means different things to different people. This is evident in the varied definitions and practices discussed in the literature. One common idea in all the interpretations is that literature can and should be the primary material used in reading instruction.

Information which provides a theoretical base for the literature-based reading instruction movement focuses largely on the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. The ideas presented are logical and substantive. Children become literate, according to advocates, by being immersed in a literate environment and by being encouraged and supported in encounters with literacy. As an integral aspect of literacy, reading ability develops as children are supported in meaningful engagement with print and whole texts, and as they are nurtured in an environment that values literacy. Studies can be identified to support the trend towards instruction with whole texts and purposeful reading.

The literature centered movement is critical of basal reading and the subskills emphases often fostered by basal programs. Proponents of the literature-based instruction movement value whole stories and an emphasis on meaning. Accordingly, activities such as readalongs, assisted reading, and shared book experiences are primary methods of having students learn to read.

However, it is necessary to ask if the research which supports skills instruction can be ignored. For example, there is strong support for early intensive instruction in phonic analysis to help students develop independence in decoding (Adams, 1990; Calfee and Drum, 1986; Chall, 1983; Trachtenburg, 1990). Further, it is necessary to ask if it is possible to combine a selected use of skills instruction in a complementary manner with a literature-based approach. There is evidence that some educators are endorsing such attempts when experience and teacher judgement indicate that particular students might benefit from such instruction. (Chall, 1983; Heymsfeld, 1989; Samuels, 1988; Trachenberg, 1990; Winograd and Greenlee, 1986).

Overall, there is a growing emphasis on using literature for reading instruction. Reports seem to indicate that the use of children's literature in the teaching of reading has a positive effect on students' achievement and attitudes toward reading. There is a growing number of articles on literatured-based reading programs that inspire educators to focus more on literature in the classroom. Educators are further encouraged by the rationale for a literature-based reading program which is rooted in holistic philosophy. As pointed out by Zarrillo (1988), however, more reports on literature-based reading instruction which present sound research designs, background information on students, and detailed descriptions of curriculum and teaching methodology would help in implementing reading programs with a literature base.

Literature-based reading instruction offers great promise for instruction in reading. At this point, the label "literature-based reading instruction" provides an umbrella for a myriad of practices. As models are developed, implemented and evaluated, studies should be made so that teachers can received guidance in using literature to develop proficient readers.

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An analysis of the literature helps bring greater clarity to educators concerning the theory and practice of literature-based instruction. There are two common threads in all the interpretations of literature-based instruction: (1) the use of literature as the primary material for reading instruction; and (2) the elimination of the structural support and practices of basal reading systems. Information which provides a theoretical base for literature-based reading instruction focuses largely on the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. Children become literate, according to the advocates, by being immersed in a literate environment and by being encouraged and supported in encounters with literacy. Studies can be identified to support the trend toward instruction with whole texts and purposeful reading. Proponents of the literature-based instruction movement value whole stories and an emphasis on meaning. Reports indicate that the use of children's literature in the teaching of reading has a positive effect on student's achievement and attitudes toward reading. There is a need for more research on literature-based reading programs and implementation strategies. There appears to be a label, "literature-based instruction," which provides an umbrella for a myriad of practices. As models are developed, implemented and evaluated, studies should be undertaken so that teachers can receive guidance in using literature to develop proficient readers. (Seventy-one references are attached.) (MG)

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